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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Louise Ray of Joliet, who passed away on January 31, 2009; and

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WHEREAS, Louise Ray was born on July 9, 1942 in Natchez, Mississippi; she married Junior Ray in 1962 in Chicago and the couple moved to Joliet in 1971; together, they had five children, Roy, Johnny, Willie, Junior II, and Tony; and

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WHEREAS, Louise Ray had a long and distinguished career in education; she began her career in Joliet in the 1970s, serving at Forest Park and Taft Schools, as well as Joliet West and Central High Schools; and

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WHEREAS, On December 6, 1987, Louise Ray lost one of her five sons to street violence in Joliet; within two weeks, she said that, as a Christian, she already had forgiven the person who killed her son; during that time, she formed a group called Mothers Against Gangs and resolved to walk, on a weekly basis, the five blocks that her son was chased by a group of attackers before he was shot; despite harassment from gang members who rode bicycles or circled around slowly in cars, flashing gang signs, she resolved to continue the walk until justice was done and encouraged other mothers to join her in a nonviolent

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1 protest against street gangs; and

2 WHEREAS, The momentum from Louise Ray's courageous
3 actions, as well as her ceaseless energy, led to what is now
4 known as the Forest Park Community Center, a familiar and
5 respected Joliet institution; the Forest Park Community
6 Center, which she founded and led until the day of her death,
7 was opened on November 7, 1994 and still is going strong today;
8 the center has matured into a multifaceted agency, providing a
9 variety of programs for youth and people of all ages; from 2004
10 to 2006, the community center was an accredited school, working
11 in tandem with Joliet Junior College and Joliet Township High
12 School to help students earn credits that they needed to get a
13 high school diploma; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1991, Louise Ray oversaw the opening of the
15 Joliet Community Midnight Basketball Program, which she helped
16 form; the program gave young men ages 18 to 26 the opportunity
17 to participate in constructive activities; she also helped form
18 the Forest Park Youth Builders, where young adults were
19 required to attend school and learn a trade; and

20 WHEREAS, Louise Ray will be remembered by all who knew and
21 loved her as a woman whose tough love and determination helped
22 countless children become educated and productive members of
23 society; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
3 her family and friends, the death of Louise Ray; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Louise Ray as an expression of our
7 sympathy.